

Thursday, Oct 26, 2017

## Oakland University approves Public Relations and Strategic Communication major

The public relations professional works hard to get positive messages into the public arena through traditional and social media methods. This field requires resourceful and creative communicators who overcome increasingly crowded airwaves with impactful stories that help promote their clients' objectives. It is also a profession expected to grow in the next several years.

To fill that expected need, a newly approved [Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations and Strategic Communication](#) has been added at Oakland University. OU's program begins with the Fall 2018 semester and joins only two other universities in Southeast Michigan offering such a degree. Currently, public relations is the most popular minor in the [Department of Communication and Journalism](#).

And, for prospective and current students who are interested in careers in public relations, advertising, media planning and strategic consulting, the PR faculty members are holding PR major informational sessions on [noon-1 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 8](#) and [6:30-7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 9](#). Both information sessions will be held at Vandenberg Hall, Room 106.

"For the first year, 30 students will be admitted into the new PR major," said [Chiaoning Su, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism](#) who has helped shape the curriculum. "Applications for the charter class will begin being accepted in January 2018 and will be considered contingent upon many factors, including a 3.0 grade point average or better in WRT 1060 Writing Composition II, JRN 2000 Intro to Journalism and News Writing and JRN 2500 Intro to Public Relations."

"This program will be rigorous both in theories classes and applied skills," according to [Garry Gilbert, director of the journalism program](#) and chair of the committee that brought forward the idea of adding public relations nearly three years ago. "Several new classes be offered including, writing for PR, research methods in public relations and a crisis communication class."

The committee saw a growing interest from students and surveyed 36 area PR agencies who all thought adding this major would help graduates find jobs after college.

"Our location is optimum for students to get a great internship in PR, and we know those internships tend to lead to jobs," Gilbert said.

Su added, "Our long-term plans include establishing a chapter in the Public Relations Student Society of America and developing study abroad internship opportunities."

Another encouraging sign is that employment of public relations specialists is projected to grow 6 percent from 2014 to 2024, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Their PR report indicates, "The need for organizations to maintain their public image will continue to drive employment growth. Candidates can expect strong competition for jobs at advertising and public relations firms and organizations with la media exposure."



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